

Angeles Objection Issue Summary - NEPA

Objectors:

California Chaparral Institute - Richard Halsey

Summary:

Objectors are concerned about the use of best available science in fuels projects.

“We object to the USFS’s response in the LMP Amendment to the suggestion we made to apply the best available science, including USFS scientist Dr. Jack Cohen’s, in determining how the Forest Service manages chaparral near communities. The USFS responded that incorporating such science was “outside the scope of this analysis.” We find such a conclusion unsupportable since the main reason for fuel treatments is to protect communities... Such an approach would guide individual projects and would avoid the repetitive nature of comment letters from us and others that continually remind the USFS that conducting landscape level fuel treatments, 300 foot buffers, and cool season prescribed burns unnecessarily damage the chaparral and are not scientifically supportable or cost effective in terms of structure protection?”

Review Team Summary:

As stated in the Response to Comments, the issue related to use of best available science in project design is beyond the scope of this analysis, which is to amend LMP land use zone allocations for select IRAs and to amend LMP monitoring and evaluation protocols. in response to the terms of the Settlement Agreement between the Forest Service, State of California, and other settlement parties.

The Forest’s response to the objector’s comment that the use of research to design fuels management treatments is best considered at the project level is correct. It would be appropriate to consider the research suggested by the objector in designing site-specific projects - it is important to consider recent and emerging science on chaparral ecology and structure protection when choosing the best management strategies for these plant communities and the adjacent urban areas. The Forest Service has not rejected the objector’s suggestion to use best available science, but rather has stated that the science suggested by the objector is more appropriately applied at the project level than at the Land Management Plan level.

REMEDY(S) PROPOSED BY OBJECTORS

- Use best available science, including the work of Dr. Jack Cohen, to design fuels treatments near communities, in order to promote health of the chaparral community and provide cost-effective structure protection.

INSTRUCTIONS BEING CONSIDERED

- No instructions are recommended.